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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2400

Feb. 17, 1989



YEUTTER SWEARING-IN -- Associate Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor administers the oath of office as secretary of agriculture to Clayton Yeutter on Feb. 16. Miss Kim Yeutter, President George W. Bush and Mrs. Jeanne Yeutter watch. USDA Radio and USDA TV covered the event live. (USDA photo by Larry Rana.)

MAGNET -- The old Minnesota Farm Radio Network has changed its name and done a bit of reorganizing. Its now called "MAGNET." MAGNET Executive Producer Tom Rothman says his network was commonly called the Minnesota Ag Net, but that some of its member stations also serve Iowa. Thus, the change to "MAGNET," which certainly is a name with "drawing" or "magnetic" power. Rothman says ten farm broadcasters across this agriculturally divergent state feed the net with reports, which he edits and packages for air. He also anchors market broadcasts. Contact: Tom Rothman (612) 290-1486.

RADIO & TV DRAW -- Television now reaches 87.4 million U.S. households (about 98 percent), with the average household having a set on for more than seven hours a day. Cable-TV grew from a third of all American households to half during the past five years. Meanwhile, radio is in a "renaissance" period. More than 100,000 stations are already on the air, with about 96 percent of the U.S. population age 12 and older -- 191 million -- tuned to radio each week. Most listeners tune to FM rather than AM. Most listen to stations that broadcast specialized programming. So says the "Five-Year Communications Industry Forecast" produced in 1988 by Veronis, Suhler & Associates, Inc., of New York, N.Y., summarized in a recent issue of the Social Science Monitor newsletter.

NO LINK BETWEEN CANCER AND DDT -- A University of Alabama study spanning ten years in the lives of nearly 1,000 people found no statistically significant link between the amount of DDT in their bodies and the risk of death by cancer. But the study was not large enough to detect a small increase in human cancers, the scientists said. Contact: Dr. Harland Austin, University of Alabama School of Public Health, Birmingham, Ala. (205) 934-7130.



RUSSIAN WHEAT APHID -- *Farmers who sign up for USDA's Conservation Reserve Program may be able to outmaneuver the Russian wheat aphid -- a devastating pest of wheat and other cereal crops. This scaling electronic photo shows the distinctive two tails of the pest. USDA has a list of 25 grasses used in the CRP that are least likely to host and be damaged by the pest. Contact: S. Dean Kidler (405) 624-4189.*

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1654 -- The government has approved the use of ionizing radiation on some food items to sterilize them, but the process of "irradiation" is still quite controversial. Pat O'Leary explores this issue. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1643 -- USDA News Highlights, beef check-off system, cattle and genetic engineering, export outlook, soybeans and sunflowers on permitted acreage. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 min. features.)

CONSUMER TIME #1135 -- Scenic by-ways, scarce water; Project Fresh; teaching youth about water quality; new food education approach. (Weekly reel of news features)

UPCOMING -- Wed., Feb. 22, livestock/poultry outlook, foreign ag trade update; Thurs., Feb. 23, poultry production, export outlook; Fri., Feb. 24, red meat production, feed outlook; Monday, Feb. 27, cotton/wool outlook; Tues., Feb. 28, crop/weather update, ag prices, world tobacco outlook; Wed., March 1, horticultural exports; Thurs., March 2, fruit outlook; Monday, March 6, world cocoa situation; Tues., March 7, crop/weather update, vegetable outlook; Wed., March 8, sugar outlook; Thurs., March 9, U.S. crop report, world ag supply & demand.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.  
Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA NEWS SERVICE and AGRICULTURAL UPDATE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

Thursdays . . . . . AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST,  
Transponder 120

Saturdays . . . . . AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST,  
ORIGINAL UPLINK Transponder 100

Mondays . . . . . AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST,  
REPEAT UPLINK Transponder 120

OFF MIKE

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY...of Secretary Yeutter offered us an opportunity to talk with many farm broadcasters across the nation. To summarize: Moisture conditions vary widely, some regions remaining very dry, others doing quite well; general attitude is that time remains for winter and spring precip to improve conditions; business prospects generally seem brighter, expanded acreage and production means economic activity, reflected in anticipated increased ad sales.

BUD EMERGENCE...and sap on apple trees was observed by Jack McConnell (KAWL, York, Neb.) last month, then the cold snap and now warm temperatures again. Confusion reigns supreme.

Farm Broadcasters Letter  
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U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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PUBLICATIONS...reviewed in past issues of this letter were recently ordered by Sandra Heng (RFD-TV, Omaha), says they'll come in handy. Most items remain available. Call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445 to get copies.

MARCH...is Nutrition Month, and March 20 is Nat'l Agriculture Day. Have you started plans for your station's observance?

FEEDBACK...received recently from Bob Johnson (WKIK, Leonardtown, Md.) says he finds use for all items on our weekly radio cassette. David Langley (Louisiana Farm Bureau), noticed the improvements Lynn Wyvill and Debbie Janifer are making in our TV News Service satellite feeds, and liked the items on Secretary Yeutter's confirmation hearings. We surely appreciate the nice words, and are grateful that those who use our products took the time to let us know what they thought about them. Big happenings at your station? Let us know.

Vic Powell, Chief, Radio & Television Division